

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
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**Eleventh United Nations Conference on the
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New York, 8-17 August 2017

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups
and task teams since the Tenth Conference****Report of the Working Group on Romanization Systems:
current status of United Nations romanization systems for
geographical names****Summary****

The report of the Working Group on Romanization Systems outlines the main developments in respect of the status of various romanization systems in the agenda of the Working Group on Romanization Systems under the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. Information is provided on the romanization systems for Arabic, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Hebrew, Khmer, Macedonian Cyrillic, Persian and Ukrainian; and Armenian, Georgian, Kazakh, Lao and Sinhala. It is expected that the unified Arabic romanization system (2007) will be submitted for approval to the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The latest new developments have been reported concerning Lao and Sinhala.

The Working Group on Romanization Systems monitors the status of romanization systems in its agenda, including both those that have been approved by the United Nations and those that are still being discussed. The report lists major developments since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 2012.¹ Full details on romanization systems are available on the website of the Working Group (<http://www.eki.ee/wgrs>).

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Peeter Päll, Convenor of the Working Group, and will be made available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/54/CRP.54.

¹ Updates (2017) to the information reported previously (in 2014 and 2016) were provided, inter alia, by Irina Borodich (Belarus), Gloria Djadjeva (Bulgaria), Chharom Chin (Cambodia), Natalia Kizileva (Ukraine), Artur Avdalyan (Armenia), Shukia Apridonidze (Georgia), Noun Phommixay (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and D.N.D. Hettiarachchi (Sri Lanka).



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**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for
distribution only)**

**Report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland****Summary****

There is no national names authority in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, although both Scotland and Wales have place-name authorities. In practice, the geographical names as portrayed on printed and digital products of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain are recognized as being authoritative. Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland, administered within Land and Property Services, performs a similar function in Northern Ireland. The report outlines the function of Ordnance Survey as the national mapping agency and its role with regard to toponymy, and highlights developments since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. It contains information on names policy, database management and geographical names products.

Geographical names for places and features outside the United Kingdom are the responsibility of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, whose objectives are described in the report. The Permanent Committee gathers information on names standardized by national authorities to inform the Government of the United Kingdom of appropriate names to be used on its products.

The United Kingdom has issued a new edition of the toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors (E/CONF.105/32/CRP.32), for the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, to be submitted under item 9 (e) of the provisional agenda.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names and the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain, and is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/unegncnf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/55/CRP.55.



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**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity
(including indigenous, minority and regional
language names)****Slovene field and house names in Carinthia: measures for
the preservation and creative transfer of the intangible
cultural heritage (United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization (UNESCO))****Summary****

In 2010, Slovene field and house names in Carinthia (Kärnten) were included in the Austrian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The traditional Slovene field and house names are part of the living cultural heritage and are deeply rooted in the minds of the Slovene and German-speaking Carinthian population. These names form an essential part of the linguistic and cultural identity of the Carinthian Slovenes. The preservation of local Slovene microtoponyms is a matter of major concern for many individuals, communities, associations, institutions and researchers in Carinthia. They try to not only document the traditional Slovene field and house names, but also consolidate them for daily use. For this purpose, maps and hiking maps featuring the names of the locations both in their dialect form and in standard Slovenian were created in previous years. The documented toponyms and maps are available at the Internet portal www.flurnamen.at (www.ledinskaimena.si).

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report, which was prepared by Martina Piko-Rustia (Austria), Urban Jarnik Slovene Ethnographic Institute, Klagenfurt a.W., is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEgn/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/56/CRP.56.



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and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Tenth Conference
(for distribution only)****Standardization of geographical names in Japan****Summary****

In Japan, geographical names are collected, arranged and standardized by relevant government agencies as they promote their administrative activities. Consequently, the standardization of geographical names is a well-coordinated effort involving various related organizations that have clearly defined tasks. Efforts towards standardization include the following:

- Standardization of geographical names of administrative districts
- Consolidation of geographical names of natural features
- Standardization of geographical names of undersea features
- Adoption of Antarctic geographical names
- National Geographical Names Gazetteer

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Kazuhiko Akeno, Geospatial Information Authority of Japan. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/57/CRP.57.



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**Toponymic data files and gazetteers: data services, applications
and products (for example, gazetteers and web services)**

**Publication of geographical name information in vector
tile format****Summary****

In Japan, data are released by government agencies in accordance with the Government's open data strategies. In this regard, the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan has been providing map data on the Internet in a machine-readable vector format on a pilot basis since August 2014. Since July 2017, it has been providing geographical name information in the same way. The report provides detailed information in this regard.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Kazuhiko Akeno, Geospatial Information Authority of Japan. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/58/CRP.58.



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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reflection on the past, present and future: the fiftieth
anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

**Composition, history and contribution of the
Norden Division****Summary****

The Norden Division is one of the 24 linguistic/geographical divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, comprising Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

All the member countries represent Scandinavian languages, but Finland participates only in relation to one of its two national languages, Swedish. Its other national language, Finnish, and the Sami language are Uralic languages. Sami is spoken across borders, covering the northern parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The Chair of the Division usually serves for the period between two United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The first Chair was Per Hovda (Norway). He was followed by Allan Rostvik (Sweden), Eeva Maria Närhi (Finland), Botolv Helleland (Norway), Hans Ringstam (Sweden), Sirkka Paikkala (Finland) and Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark), with the last-mentioned serving for two terms. Ingvil Nordland (Norway) will serve as Chair after the Eleventh Conference.

The Division has had its own website since 2008.¹ It is organized in accordance with resolution I/4 on national standardization, adopted in 1967. Its aim is to present concise information about issues pertaining to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names within the Division area, with links to additional information regarding the Group and the national authorities of the Division's members. Peder Gammeltoft is currently in charge of the site.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Botolv Helleland (Norway). The report is available from <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/59/CRP.59.

¹ See <http://nordendivision.nfi.ku.dk/>.



At the First Conference, in 1967, Denmark, Norway and Sweden gave an account of a common Scandinavian transcription for geographical names written in the Cyrillic alphabet, stating that similar work for transcription from other writing systems, including Arabic and Chinese, was in progress. They also reported on a common spelling of the Skagerrak. At the Fourth Conference, the Division reported on a list of Nordic forms of States, inhabitant names and related adjectives.

At the meeting of the Division in March 1992, held in Helsinki, the participants discussed the reduction of exonyms in line with the resolutions of the Conferences. Other topics were the stability of the romanization systems and how to trigger the implementation of the Group's recommendations in internal institutions.

Amendments to the statute of the Group with regard to the cultural value of geographical names were presented at the Division's meeting in 2005. They were presented again at the twenty-ninth session of the Group, held in April 2016 in Bangkok, by the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage.

Over the years, there has been close cooperation between the Division and the Baltic Division. In 1997, toponymic courses were organized in Riga, with support from experts from Finland, Norway and Sweden. In 2013, a joint day of meetings of both divisions was held in Tallinn, followed by a seminar on the integration of onomastic data into geospatial infrastructure.

In October 2010, a joint event between the Division and the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology was held at the Institute for Language and Folklore in Uppsala, Sweden. A joint meeting of the Division and the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage was held in September 2015 at the Department of Nordic Research at the University of Copenhagen. It was also attended by members of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation and the Working Group on Publicity and Funding.

At the Fourth Conference, the Division reported that toponymic guidelines for cartography had been presented by all Nordic countries. Several countries have since submitted updated versions.

The Division has taken several initiatives to promote geographical names in minority areas, such as the publication of a Nordic place names database and a corresponding web service in 1999. The web project was coordinated and the database hosted by the National Land Survey of Finland. The Division is also looking into producing a web-based resource for minority geographical names within the Division area. The use of minority names is based on the laws and/or regulations of the countries concerned.

The report includes a table showing the main elements and steps in the standardization process in the member countries of the Division.

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**Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and
task teams since the Tenth Conference**

Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology**Summary****

The report provides a brief overview of the activities of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology during the period 2013-2017. It begins with a short background, presenting the Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names, published in 2002, and the addendum thereto (2007), followed by a summary of the Working Group meetings from 2007 to 2012, after which a Working Group meeting in Corfu in 2013 is described in a little more detail. A short section then discusses a preliminary terminology database that was prepared in Copenhagen and demonstrated in New York in 2012. This database needs to be finalized, to replace the printed version of the Glossary. However, this will not be the responsibility of the present Convenor of the Working Group, who will be stepping down from his position after the current Conference.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Staffan Nyström (Sweden), Convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, and is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/60/CRP.60.



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**Reports by Governments on the situation in their
countries and on the progress made in the standardization
of geographical names since the Tenth Conference
(for distribution only)**

Report of Poland for the period 2012-2017**Summary****

The report provides information on the progress made by Poland on geographical names issues since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

National names authorities. There are two commissions engaged in the standardization of geographical names in Poland: the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects, which is affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration and establishes names used within the country's boundaries, and the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland, which is affiliated to the Surveyor General of Poland and is responsible for standardizing geographical names of the world in Polish, establishing the principles of romanization from languages that use non-roman writing systems, representing Poland in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and participating in international conferences and meetings on geographical names.

National gazetteer. The new edition of the Polish national gazetteer, which contains 103,086 official names of localities and parts thereof, was published in October 2015.¹ The names are listed in a table with eight columns: the name and type of the locality are indicated in the first and second columns, while the third to fifth columns give the commune, county and voivodeship in which the locality is found. The sixth column is for the identifier of the locality, taken from the National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country. The seventh column

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Maciej Zych, Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEgn/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/61/CRP.61.

¹ See http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/official_names.php.



gives the genitive ending for names of localities, while the eighth column, applicable only to names of towns and villages, gives the relevant adjective. Changes to the names listed are published each year in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* and enter into force on 1 January.

Multilingual areas. According to the Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and regional languages, traditional names in a minority language may be used as "additional names". Altogether, 453 new names of localities have been established since 2012, of which 35 were German names in 4 communes and 418 were Kashubian names in 12 communes. Since 2005, minority names have been introduced for 1,240 localities, disaggregated as follows: 359 German names, 815 Kashubian names, 30 Lithuanian names, 27 Belarusian names and 9 Lemko names.²

Exonyms. A new list of Polish exonyms was published at the end of 2013.³ It gives Polish names for 13,358 geographical objects outside the boundaries of Poland. For each object, the Polish name and the original name (endonym) are given, along with the object's coordinates. If necessary, additional information and observations are provided. The list has been divided into eight parts, of which seven correspond to the traditionally determined parts of the world (Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Oceania and Antarctica) and the eighth is devoted to undersea objects. The names are posted in the alphabetical order of the countries and Non-Self-Governing Territories. Names of geographical features of individual countries or Territories are arranged by categories. The list has been published in Polish only, but the inset is available in English.

Toponymic data files. The National Register of Geographical Names is maintained by the Main Geodetic and Cartographic Documentation Centre, responsibility for which is vested in the Surveyor General of Poland. Currently, it holds some 247,700 names, of which some 124,600 are names of localities and parts thereof and some 123,000 are names of physiographic objects (some 21,800 names of water objects, some 34,700 names of land objects and some 66,500 names of other objects).

Terminology in the standardization of geographical names. The new Polish translation of the Group's glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical names was published at the end of 2014.⁴ This is a new translation of the English version from 2002 and the addendum from 2007.

Writing systems and pronunciation. As a part of its activity, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland adopts rules of romanization for geographical objects whose names are originally expressed in non-roman writing systems. Rules of transliteration and rules of Polish phonetic transcription are recommended for use in Polish cartographic products and other publications.

Country names. The third edition of the official list of names of countries and Non-Self-Governing Territories was published at the end of 2015.⁵ The list contains 195 countries recognized by Poland and 69 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The names of the countries, Territories and their capitals have obtained the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

² A full and regularly updated list of the additional names in minority languages is available from http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/files/list_of_minority_names.pdf.

³ Available from http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/wpns_en.php.

⁴ Available from http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/pliki/glossary_of_terms_PL.pdf.

⁵ Available from <http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/wykaz.php>.

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Writing systems and pronunciation: romanization

**Rules of romanization of geographical names applied
in Poland****Summary****

One of the activities of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland involves the establishment of romanization rules governing names of geographical objects originally rendered in non-Roman writing systems. As part of that activity, the Commission has adopted, for each language, both rules of transliteration and rules of Polish phonetic transcription. There are some exceptions for Asian languages: for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Lao, Burmese and Khmer, only transliteration is recommended. Moreover, for the majority of regional and local official languages, Polish phonetic transcription rules have not yet been developed.

Altogether, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland has adopted romanization rules for 37 languages. The Commission applies, without formal adoption, rules for another 40 languages. Among 30 rules adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the Commission recommends rules for 12 languages. In the case of 15 other languages, which are in the agenda of the Working Group on Romanization Systems, although they were not formally adopted by the Conference, the Commission recommends rules for 6 of them. In addition, the Commission applies romanization rules for 33 languages not listed on the website of the Working Group.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Maciej Zych, Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEgn/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/63/CRP.63.



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**National and international meetings, conferences,
symposiums, publicity and publications**

International Map Year 2015-2016**Summary****

International Map Year, an initiative launched by the International Cartographic Association and supported and endorsed by the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific, the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management was marked, from August 2015 to December 2016, by a number of additional cartographic and toponymic activities, such as map days and exhibitions and publications. Considerable extra awareness was thus generated throughout society worldwide about cartography, toponymy and geographical information systems.

Special attention is given in the report to the popular e-book, *The World of Maps*, produced for International Map Year, which has been translated into five languages and can be downloaded free of charge from the International Cartographic Association website, making it accessible to most of the world's population. The paper includes sample chapters from two of the different language versions.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Ferjan Ormeling, Netherlands, and is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/64/CRP.64.



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**Reports by Governments on the Situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Tenth Conference
(for distribution only)**

Report of the Netherlands**Summary****

In accordance with the procedure in use in the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the relevant actions and achievements of the Netherlands have been set out in the report under the headings of the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

The following aspects are of particular importance:

- Experts from the Netherlands remain strongly involved in the organization of training courses in toponymy, with courses being held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 2012, Antananarivo, in 2013, Oran, Algeria, in 2014, Tunis, in 2015, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2017.
- The toponyms of the Frisian minority group have received wider attention in the relevant databases and maps.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Ferjan Ormeling, University of Amsterdam, and Jasper Hogerwerf, Kadaster. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEgn/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/65/CRP.65.



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Toponymic education

International toponymy course held in Brazil in May 2017**Summary****

From 15 to 19 May 2017, staff from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics and lecturers from the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy organized a toponymy course for staff engaged in the collection and processing of geographical names from the Latin America and Portuguese-speaking divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. There were 34 participants from seven countries.

The accompanying fieldwork was new in the sense that it was aimed at validating or certifying names whose spelling, location or nature could not be ascertained in the office. Special attention was also paid as part of the fieldwork, which was conducted in the environs of the coastal town of Mangaratiba, 85 km west of Rio de Janeiro, to the cultural heritage aspects of place names that reflected phases of Brazilian history.

* E/CONF.105/L.

** The full report was prepared by Ferjan Ormeling, convener of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/66/CRP.66.



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Toponymic education

Advanced toponymy manual**Summary****

The plan to have an advanced toponymy course, launched at the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, was subsequently changed to a plan to produce a manual that would be downloadable from the website of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and contain the same content, which would enable a larger number of people to be reached. A team of reviewers was constituted and authors were solicited at the twenty-eighth session of the Group, held in 2014. Most of their contributions were received by the time of the twenty-ninth session, held in 2016, and the material was reviewed and adapted to the layout constraints before the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The format is such that, as time passes, chapters can easily be amended and new chapters added in order to keep the manual up to date.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Ferjan Ormeling, assisted by Helen Kerfoot and Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu. The report is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/67/CRP.67.





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on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and
task teams since the Tenth Conference**

Report of the China division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Summary**

Since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, China has carried out its second national survey of geographical names and has made progress in the fields of toponymic cultural heritage, toponymic public services and toponymic publications.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared and submitted by China, and is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the languages of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/68/CRP.68.



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National standardization

**Efforts by China to rectify and standardize non-standard
geographical names****Summary****

Geographical names are important vehicles of national and ethnic culture. With the rapid development of a new type of urbanization in China, a large number of geographical names have disappeared and new ones continue to appear. At the same time, the emergence of exaggerated, foreign, strange or redundant geographical names has damaged the toponymic culture and cut off the historical tradition. The Government of China has taken the second national survey of geographical names as an opportunity and made special plans to rectify and standardize the existing non-standard geographical names. This activity is presently being officially implemented as planned.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared and submitted by China, and is available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html>, in the languages of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/69/CRP.69.

